

Special Education Subcommittee Meeting

October 15, 2015 - 10AM – 12:30PM

Location: Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley

830 S Addison Ave, Villa Park (corner of Addison and Madison)

Conference Line: 888-494-4032

Access Code: 611 304 5703#

Attendees:

Theresa Forthofer, Karen Berman, Alli Lowe-Fotos, Bernadette Laumann, Donna Nylander, Evelyn Green, Margie Harkness, Joyce Senters, Trish Rooney, Edna Navarro-Vidaurre, Sandy De Leon, Lynn Barts, Rose Gallagher, Margie Wakelin, Amy Zimmerman, Carmen Garcia, Ann Freiburg, Teresa Kelly, and Ann Kremer

I. Welcome and Introductions

Karen Berman, Ounce of Prevention Fund, welcomed participants and thanked Easter Seals and Theresa Forthofer for hosting the meeting. Participants introduced themselves.

II. Approve Minutes from 6/18/15 Meeting

Karen Berman stated that a draft of the minutes from the 6/18/2015 meeting has been provided and inquired as to whether anyone had any corrections or comments related to the draft. One change was pointed out in the minutes: Kristy Doan's name was spelled incorrectly. Karen made a note of the change (changing Chrissy Doe to Kristy Doan) and asked for a motion to approve the minutes. After a motion was made and seconded, the minutes were approved unanimously.

III. Budget Update

Karen Berman gave an update about the state budget as it relates to children with disabilities. No budget has been approved and the Child Care Assistance Program remains in danger. Early Intervention (EI) is a bit luckier, at least temporarily, because of a federal consent decree applicable to funding EI services in the state. Ann Freiburg updated the participants that she is working on possible payments to partner entities as well, but she does not have any other updates at this time. Lynn Barts said that the advocacy efforts regarding EI have helped with the payments being made to EI providers. However, Lynn also pointed out that we have lost a lot of quality providers as a result of the budget impasse and EI providers waiting to be paid, and families have had to choose new EI providers.

Karen updated the participants that the Comptroller publicly stated yesterday that the state is short on revenue and payments for state pensions will be delayed as a consequence.

Alli Lowe-Fotos updated the participants on the impact of the budget impasse on home visiting. While federal funds are coming through, some state funds are not being issued. This could be an issue because the federal funding, through the Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program, is tied to Illinois' Race to the Top and Preschool Expansion Grants.

IV. Recommendations regarding Child Find Data Collection

Karen Berman provided participants with some background on the proposed Recommendations regarding Child Find Data Collection that were circulated in draft form (the “Recommendations”). She stated that we appreciated the feedback that we had received to date and welcomed today’s discussion. To date, Karen and her team at the Ounce have engaged agencies and programs with regard to the Recommendations. Alli Lowe-Fotos proceeded to lead a discussion regarding the Recommendations, starting with overall thoughts and then addressing each of the Recommendations.

- Overall comments on the Recommendations
 - Donna Nylander stated that it is a great document that flows well and is understandable. Donna’s comment was seconded by many other participants. Joyce Senters thought that an FAQ was not needed to accompany the Recommendations due to how well the document is organized.
 - Various participants shared that the improved data will be helpful for allocating resources and liked that the Recommendations added categories of referrals.
 - A question was raised as to whether there will be an opportunity to enter data electronically so programs do not need to fax the Child Find Data Collection form (the “Form”) to ISBE.
- Recommendations #1-4
 - Alli provided a brief description of these recommendations.
 - Joyce Senters said different entities can look at the data and also increase the networking opportunities. She asked how neighboring districts/areas are doing screenings.
 - Amy Zimmerman recommended tying Child Find data to a longitudinal data system.
 - Karen and Alli remarked that this will be a topic of further discussion. Until such a data system is operational, the Child Find information is not tied to an individual child. In the Recommendations, we are not making the recommendation to have unduplicated count because this is not possible currently in this system. The Child Find data for now will be aggregated.
 - Karen noted that we had to give up a recommendation about tracking referrals and follow-up right now.
 - Karen shared that Pam Reising Rechner from ISBE had expressed concerns about ISBE holding this data and their capacity to collect it. In previous conversations, Pam said that she is willing to make some changes in the short term. Karen stated that she will be engaging in more conversations with Pam and Kathy Hill.
 - Participants asked whether we could move to an electronic platform and have the unified data system (UDS) being explored by the Data, Research and Evaluation Committee (DRE) of the Early Learning Council and/or IECAM hold this information. Karen stated that this will be the long-term discussion. In the interim, Alli stated that we need to investigate where programs are already collecting data and using systems, and how can we use these temporarily in lieu of UDS. Our next steps will include talking with DRE and IECAM.
 - Theresa Forthofer described an initiative of Easter Seals DuPage and Fox Valley with child care centers. They are in the first year of a three year project, and they are going back to their funder to talk about data tracking piece. To date,

1,000 children have been screened through the initiative (approximately 80 – 100 children a month). Theresa shared one pushback that Easter Seals has encountered: some are suggesting that Easter Seals are undertaking the screening initiative in order to gain referrals. Lynn Barts stated that she wants to network with Theresa surrounding this issue of barriers. Alli brought up that connecting all these communities is later on the agenda.

- Amy asked if a report could be provided more than on a yearly basis. Alli described that currently data is collected monthly and quarterly, and information is sent back out to certain parties quarterly, but it was not posted publicly and no one was using it.
 - Alli noted that one of the recommendations is that the report/data be posted publicly on a website.
 - Karen also stated that we recommend (in Recommendation #17) that Child Find collect information quarterly instead of monthly. Illinois is not under any mandate to collect this information nor to do it with any particular regularity. Participants at the meeting agreed that quarterly makes more sense: (i) easier to collect and report data; and (ii) we might not see many changes if it is monthly. Trish Rooney mentioned that the inconsistent timelines of collection (some parties submit it monthly and submit it quarterly) makes it hard to analyze data at all. Theresa brought up that Easter Seals is two months behind and so frequent data collection can be a challenge from their perspective. Everyone agreed to data being submitted quarterly (instead of monthly).
- Sandy asked how the regions are organized. The participants did not know, but thought there was overlap.
- Joyce asked if there would be a benefit to asking for the zip code where the screening is taking place as well. Sandy agreed with this. Theresa shared that it can be a heavy lift for providers/reporters that undertake a large number of screenings.
- Donna suggested that we do as much using what we already have in place first so we do not overburden people. For the statewide perspective, we want to make sure we are covering the state. The participants talked at length about diving into CFCs but also their capacity. Karen and Alli mentioned that we do not want to lose where kids live; if we get information just on the place where screening takes place, we might not answer the community piece.
- A participant asked about making the Form an Excel spreadsheet. We will need to go back to ISBE to get their input.
- Alli stated that asking for the zip code of individual child was our stab at finding an unduplicated number, but what we're realizing is that maybe this is not possible in the Form in this capacity. Instead, maybe we could be a recommendation in the UDS/electronic/long term situation. In the meantime, it was discussed that we just ask for zip code of where screening is taking place. (See also Recommendation #6 below.) It was recommended that we change the wording in Recommendation #6 to collect the zip code of where the screening takes place (instead of where the child lives).
- Lynn raised the question as to whose responsibility it is to collect/report the data. She noted that the CFCs often have to go out chasing the data, and it can be very hard. Alli stated that the training, messaging and guidance piece will be a big conversation later. Karen discussed that there is a recommendation about housing this outside of ISBE and putting this in grant re-competes.

- A question was raised about the capacity of child care centers because some of them do not have internet access and access to Excel. How will they be able to submit data? If we make this a requirement system wide or in funding, it was asked whether the CCR&Rs could step in a bit to help child care providers.
- Recommendation #5
 - Alli described how this recommendation will clarify the Form for the benefit of community-based providers. She described how completing the blanks in Section 1 for “CFC”, “Name of School District” and “District #” may be confusing.
 - It was suggested that we need to make it clear on the Form that the information for the school district should be the school district where child resides. However, it was decided instead that we should change the text in the Form (i.e., “Name of School District” and “District #”) to provide “Screener” or “Name of Screening Agency” and not assume that it is only a school district or CFC.
 - It was suggested that the Form have a drop-down menu to give people options or list examples.
 - Ann brought up that she has been informed that at DHS they have to take all of their forms through DHS’s legal process. It was discussed whether the Form is a joint process of ISBE and EI. If it is an ISBE form, then they don’t have to go through this, they just identify it in their manuals.
- Recommendation #6
 - Alli described how this recommendation provides that the zip codes for children screened be added to the Child Find Form. It was discussed whether this should be the zip code where the child resides *or* where the screening of the child took place. After a discussion of the pros/cons of each, it was decided that it will be the zip codes of the screening location. A corresponding change will be made to Recommendation #6.
- Recommendation #7
 - Alli described how this recommendation adds categories of screeners (i.e., Health Providers and Home Visitors) to the Form. It was suggested and decided that this recommendation fits into Recommendation #5 and will be incorporated therein.
- Recommendation # 8
 - Alli described how this recommendation pertains to adding categories in order to capture data from the child welfare system. Alli explained that we need more clarification and we will be discussing it in more detail with DCFS.
- Recommendation #9
 - Alli explained that this recommendation includes home visiting as a referral category in the Form and adds a definition of home visiting. This recommendation was accepted.
- Recommendation #10
 - Alli explained that “# Referred to Multiple Services” was added as a referral category to Section III of the Form because some children may be referred to multiple services and we want to know how many children present like that. It was discussed that clarifying language will be added to the Directions so individuals completing the Form will

understand that “# Referred to Multiple Services” would be completed if you completed more than one of the other referral services listed in the Form. The recommendation was accepted.

- Recommendations #11 - 17
 - Alli described each of these recommendations and the rationale behind each one. Each recommendation was accepted.
- Recommendation #18
 - Alli described how this recommendation provides that certain programs (i.e., those receiving Early Childhood Block Grant funds, DCFS Protective Service funds, and Home Visiting funds) should be required to participate in Project reporting through their CFC . It was discussed that we need clarification about the health community as it pertains to this recommendation. Also, it was noted that if some entity other than the Child Find Project is charged with collecting this data, the other entity should be responsible for collecting such data.
- Recommendations #19, 20 and 21.
 - Alli described each of these recommendations and the rationale behind each one. Each recommendation was accepted.
- Recommendation #22
 - Alli described this recommendation and noted that it is one specifically marked for future consideration. Sandy DeLeon raised the question as to whether the potential “Regional Hubs,” which are being considered by the ELC, might be a cross-system structure to help implement this recommendation. The topic of the Regional Hubs and Sandy’s input was discussed. This recommendation was accepted.

V. Making Connections on Developmental Screening Initiatives throughout the State

Karen shared that she has talked with people throughout the state who have been involved with initiatives aimed at improving developmental screening practices within their communities, particularly with regard to increasing capacity with child care providers and connecting with health care providers. As she’s talked with them, Karen has learned a lot about some of the strategies that people have employed to address barriers that are particular to their community. It came to light that people should be connected with each other so they can have a dialogue to better understand what works and how some initiatives may be scaled out. It was discussed whether this should occur at a meeting of the Special Education Committee or some other space.

Edna Navarro-Vidaurre shared that Illinois Action for Children will be hosting a webinar in early December (date TBD) in which participants in the Williamson County and GESTL Innovation Zones will share their experiences regarding their developmental screening initiatives. Edna said that she will share more information about the webinar as it becomes available.

VI. Next Steps

When it becomes available, Edna will share with this subcommittee the details of the Illinois Action for Children webinar about developmental screening initiatives undertaken by two Innovation Zones.

Karen and Alli will circulate a revised version of the Child Find Recommendations. They will also initiate conversations with DRE and IECAM.

The next meeting will be held on 12/10, location TBD. Alli will send out more information to the Subcommittee in advance of the meeting.